

English as a Global Language in Post-Colonial South Asia: Perspective on Bangladesh

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English has gained status of global language in 1900's. This is a revolutionary period in the field of linguistics varieties. In this decade internet emerged, awareness of the crisis of endangered language increases and also increases public awareness of the position of English as a global language (Crystal, 2003). Without a question most people will agree in the world that English is a global language. Undoubtedly English is regarded as a global language. It is either used as a first language, second language or as a foreign language in almost every country of the world. It is by no means divested itself of a cultural public context. English plays two important roles: one is that in post-colonial contexts. In many countries, English plays an important role in the educational systems where English had always been an elite language, and another is that it creates inequalities in the society. At the same time, English is seen as an essential instrument in the economic development. It distinguishes the well- educated and economically advantaged urban dwellers from the undereducated and economically distressed rural population. At the same time, English is now emerging all over the world as a medium of communication.

It is said that English was in the right place and at the right time (Crystal, 2003). English was a language of British colony at the 19th century as well as the leader of the industrial revolution. In the 20th century, it became a language of a super economic power U.S.A. and also it is the language of technologies, linguistic opportunities, internet, broadcasting authorities. All these incidents make English

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as an internationally leading language politically, economically and academically.

The history of English education in Bangladesh has been the history of colonization. English gained a foothold in the subcontinent (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) with the advent of British rule which lasted almost for 200 years. During the British period (1757-1935), English became the major language of administration, government, and international relations in the subcontinent. The access to jobs was closely tied to the knowledge of English. Knowledge of English was limited to a certain number of people. The British came to Bengal in 1757 and were present until 1935; no reliable data are available regarding language policy and education policy. It is assumed that there was no specific language and education policy at that time. It is also not evident the British wanted to teach English to the people of the Indian subcontinent. Rather, the situation is opposite. At first, the British placed importance on local languages, but it was the Indians who at first wanted to learn the English language. For instance in 1820, the people of the town Panswell expressed their desire to learn English and they wrote to the Governor of Bombay that "to learn English that we may be employed in your service and maintain ourselves" (Parulekar 1955:133, quoted in Rahman, 1995, p. 30). In 1823, the Governor of Bombay wrote that,

"A man with such knowledge of English as we require, would easily get 150 or 200 rupees as a clerk to a merchant" (Basu 1952: 203, quoted in Rahman, *ibid*).

It is to be noted that most of the demands for learning English came from the Hindus, and the Muslims were anti-British. It is evident in Shah Abdul Aziz's statement, he mentioned, "it was abhorrent and, therefore, improper to learn English, either for a better relationship with the English or for employment under them" (Mujeeb 1967: 398, quoted in Rahman, *ibid*). To some orthodox Muslims, English was inimical. In 1935, an Educational Committee noted that Arabic and

Persian would not be treated as qualifications for getting a job. At that moment Muslim students understand the importance of learning English (Rahman, *ibid*).

Reliable data concerning British language policy can be found from the year 1935. Lord William Bentinck who was appointed as a Governor-General India in 1928 accepted the Minute, which was formulated in 2nd February 1935 by Thomas Macaulay. His Minute asserts the supremacy of English and Western culture. Bentinck was a vigorous promoter of English education in the Indian sub-continent. His main interest was to create an anglicized Indian elite. He also recommended that vernacular languages should be used among the masses. Macaulay was supporter of English education and held that local people would welcome this minute if it led to increase employment. This change can be observed in 1835 (the Governor-General-in-Council's resolution) which declares:

"The great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed in English education alone" (Sharp 130, quoted in Rahman, 1995, p. 37).

He also suggested that Madrassah (It is one kind of Boarding Schools where religious education is taught to the students usually to the poor students) and the Sanskrit college of the Muslims should be abolished and no scholarship will be given for oriental studies and all the Arabic and Sanskrit books should be ceased. It really creates an agitation among the Indians especially those who were supposed to lose their income and social status because of this change (Rahman, *ibid*). The reaction of the Muslims was very extreme because they thought that they would suffer if Madrasah from Calcutta were abolished. As Madrassah was a source of income for many Muslims, some Muslims held the view that the Government wanted to transfer people to Christianity. The agitation continued but the policy remained unchanged. On the other hand, the reaction of the Hindu Bengali was

divided into two groups. One approved of westernization and the other supported traditionalism. The traditionalists organized themselves and established Dharma Sabha (a kind of religious meeting). The Indians reaction to the Macaulay Minute was ambivalent and divided throughout the British period. Those who were working for the British were supporters of this policy and the others were not. This language policy increased the use of English in all domains of India especially in the higher level of the Judiciary. Actually the British desired that the English should eventually be the language of business throughout the country. However, Lord William Bentinck realized that the imposition of English language for all local languages would be impossible and then in one Resolution Governor-General-in-Council declared that Indian people could conduct Judicial and fiscal proceedings in any language that they understand. This sort of controversy went on at the time of the British and the British did not formulate any clear language policy. However, the Indian elites were the supporters of an overall British language stance (Rahman, *ibid*).

In 1947 India gained its independence from the United Kingdom and then Pakistan separated from India. Language plays an important play in Muslim separatism in South Asia. Hindi was a part of the Hindi separatism and also the identity marker of Hindu. The Hindi-Urdu conflict constantly divides India and Pakistan. Historically, East and West Pakistan fought for their identity. Bengali was the identity for the East Pakistan and Urdu for the identities of the West Pakistan. In 1952 the East Pakistan emerged with the language movement Known as “The Bhasha Andolon” (Rahman, *ibid*). The language movement led to the recognition of Bangladesh in 1971. Here I want to explain history of Bangla language.

History of the Bengali Language

The Bengali language has a long history and in an area that today includes not

only Bangladesh but also West Bengal and Kolkata in India. It is a member of the Indo European family of languages. In the tenth century Bengali emerged from Prakrit or Middle Indo-Aryan. The modern Bengali script derives from Brahmi Alphabet in 273 to 232 BC. The history of the Bengali language can be divided into three periods: Old Bengali (950-1350), Middle Bengali (1350-1800) and Modern Bengali (1800 to the present day) (Bengali language: Retrieved August 31, 2006, from <http://languages.iloveindia.com/bengali.html>).

Only Forty-eight poems of old Bengali between the years of 1050-1200 have survived. These are known as *charva* songs, which are composed by siddhacharyas who were Buddhist. Middle Bengali covers, from the 14th century to the middle of the 19th century. The content of the 15th century Bengali literature mainly consists of narrative poetry, the theme of which is basically religious. Among these Krittivas' Ramayan, Srikrishnavijaya, Srikrishnakirtan etc. 16th centuries Bengali literature deals with the epic poems. Epic poems of that time mainly deal with the stories of popular goddesses like Chandi and Manasa. At the end of the century, Vaishnavism, a new lyrical poetry combined with music, emerged. Seventeenth century literature dealt with the romantic verse, and was mostly composed by Muslims. The romantic verse Sati Mayana was written by the Bengali Daulat kazi, the first Bengali Arrakanese poet who wrote romantic verse. Secular poetry and narrative verse took an affinity in eighteen century Bengali literature; at the end of this century, the Kavi and Panchali forms of poetry came into being (ibid).

The nineteen-century was a period when the renaissance of Bengali took place. The evolution started from the later half of the century, with the emergence of a prose style visible at the beginning of this period. This period begins from the establishment of the Fort William College in Kolkata by the British. The founders of modern Bengali poetry were Datta (1834-1873) and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1898). The first Bengali poet who wrote blank verse and combined western

English as a Global Language in Post-Colonial South Asia: Perspective on Bangladesh influence and Indian literature was Micheal Madhusudan Datta. *Durgeshnandini*, the first Bengali romantic novel, was written by Bankim Chandra. A huge renewal can be seen in the drama and literary prose in this age. Poetry also became popular in this age. Rabindranath Tagore poet, novelist, short story writer, dramatist, essayist and literary critic gave a new meaning of Bengali literature. He received a Nobel Prize for his poem Gitanjali and he was the first Indian poet who received the Nobel Prize. The Modern age of Bengali literature begins with the establishment of the *Kallol*, a modernist movement magazine founded in 1923 by a group of writers. Kazi Nazrul Islam and Mohitlal Majumdar were among the most famous poets of this age (ibid).

Many languages have influenced Bengali vocabulary. Due to Islam, a strong Perso-Arabic influence can be seen in such as greetings “Salaam aleykum” (peace be unto you) and the reply “Wa aleykum as-salaam” (unto you also peace) as well as the names of the family members “abba” (father) and “amma” (mother). Because of British colonization, a strong influence of English can also be seen in Bengali vocabulary such as table, tiffin etc. Currently, because of the global nature of the English language, Bengali borrows many words from English such as television, telephone, video, radio etc. But in Bangladesh English is not competitor of Bengali and also it is not used as a lingua franca. It is mother tongue of 98 percent people of Bangladesh. In the later chapters I will discuss the status of Bengali and English in Bangladesh (Bangla- The official Language of Bangladesh: Retrieved 31 August, 2006, from <http://www.betelco.com/bd/bangla/bangla.html>).

Dialects of Bangladesh

Very few studies have done on dialects in Bangladesh to date. Many groupings exist regarding dialects on Bangladesh. In one group, it is mentioned that dialects of Bangladesh can be divided into four groups:

1. North Bengal dialects which include Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Bogra and Pabna.
2. Rajbanshi, the dialect of Rangpur.
3. East Bengali dialects which include Dhaka, Mymensingh, Tripura, Barishal, Shyhet, Faridpur, Jessore and Khulna.
4. South Bengal dialects which include Chittagong, Noakhali and the dialects of Chittagong Hill Tracts which are spoken by Chakmas and Murongs

(Dialect: Banglapedia Article: Boi-Mela (Book Fair), Retrieved 15 July 2007, from http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/D_0212.htm)

Another typology divides Bengali dialects into two major categories: 1. Spoken vs. literary variants

2. Regional variants.
 - 2.1 Phonological variations
 - 2.2 Fricatives
 - 2.3 Tibeto-Burman influence (Bengali Dialects: Retrieved 15 July, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_dialects)

Spoken and Literary Variants

Bengali has a strong diglossia between the spoken and written forms of the language. Two different written forms exist in Bengali. They are known as *Shadhubhasha* and *Cholitobhasha*.

Shadhubhasha. The term *Shadhu* means ‘chaste’ and *Bhasha* means ‘language’. *Shadhubhasha* mostly used in modern writing. In the written system of *Shadhubhasha*, most of the vocabulary derived from Sanskrit and the verb inflections is longer than

Cholitobhasa. The national anthem of India is composed in *Shadhubhasa* (Bengali Dialects: Retrieved 15 July, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_dialects).

Cholitobhasa. The term *Cholito* means ‘current’ and *Bhasa* means ‘language’. *Cholitobhasa* is written in colloquial idiom. *Cholitobhasa* is standard of written Bengali. Writing in *Cholitobhasa* become popular at 19th century. The writings of Peary Chand Mitra (*Alaler ghare dula*), Pramatha Chowdhury (*Sabujpatra*, 1914) and later Rabindranath Tagore reflect this form (Bengali Dialects: Geographical distribution: Retrieved 15 July, 2007, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_dialects).

The variation of *Cholitobhasa* is far more in the spoken form rather than written form. Formal spoken Bengali like news reports, speeches, announcements and lectures delivered on *Cholitobhasa*. The spoken form of *Cholitobhasa* has many variation and those are known as *Ancholic Bhasa* (regional Bengali). Most of Bangladeshi people can communicate in more than one dialect. Sometimes speakers are fluent in *Cholitobhasa*, in one *Ancholic Bhasa* and also in one *Grammo Bhasa* (rural Bengali). The differences of these dialects are mostly phonological and phonetic one rather than grammatical one. Some dialects share the feature of *Shadhu Bhasa* (ibid).

Regional Variants

The name of the regional dialects generally originates from the districts where the language is spoken. There is no agreement of the description of regional dialects. Even the standard Bengali language does not show how many dialects are available in the Bengali language. In spoken Bengali regional variation constitute a dialect continuum. Speech varies with the distance of few miles. Among the

religious communities speech also takes distinct forms.

Phonological variations. In the western and eastern Bengal, there is a marked phonological difference between the speeches of Bengalis. The grammar is same but only difference is on accent (ibid).

Fricatives. The difference of fricatives is visible between the Kolkata and Bangladeshi Bengali. Many stops and affricates in Kolkata Bengali are pronounced as fricatives in Dhaka (ibid).

Tibeto-Burman influence. The influence of Tibeto-Burman language is seen in the Bengali language. The influence is mainly on phonology. It is visible through the lack of nasalized vowels in Bengali and, a more fronted place of articulation for the apico-postalveolar stops and the lack of distinctions between two “/r/ sounds” or “two liquids” (ibid).

Sometimes different speakers pronounced same words in a different way. It happens because of social, educational, cultural and religious persuasion. This variety is widely visible among the Bengali speakers.

Bangla language has long history and culture and also in spite of the thrust of the Bengali language movement and after the independence of Bangladesh English plays a continuing important role in Bangladesh. Today, about 3 percent of the population of Bangladesh is using English as a second language (Baumgardner, 1996, p. 1). English is also assigned importance in all Education Commission Reports. It is used as a medium of communication in the international and global community. Nationalist sentiments strongly promote the indigenous language, Bengali, in place of English, and the Bengali Implementation Act (1987) in Bangladesh reveals this fact. In spite of this movement and its legalization, English is still being learned and is a marker of social, economical and political advancement of South Asia (Baumgardner, ibid).

English retained its official standing within the Bangladeshi society, continuing

to be used within the legal system, government and secondary and higher education. The acquisition of English is linked with economic and educational gain while English education is accessible to a very few people of Bangladesh. The aim of this paper is to state English as a global language in South-Asia with special reference of Bangladesh.

The bulk of data in this paper consists of results of interviews with thirteen policy planners. In this paper I will discuss what the policy planners think about the present educational system of Bangladesh. This paper is organized by the key ideas or themes. This paper presents the responses of the policy planners that were acquired through in-depth interviews. In this chapter I will discuss policy planner's views over the status of Bengali and English education, necessity of English education, medium of instruction policy in the secondary school and methods of English teaching in Bangladesh.

I tried to conduct the interviews in a very informal way. I tried to use the language through which interviewees feel comfortable. Most of the policy planners spoke in English, but two of them seemed to me feeling comfortable speaking in Bengali. I conducted their interviews in Bengali. Interviews took place in policy planners' homes and other locations.

I first explained to the interviewees that I had come from Japan where I am studying. I explained to them that I am working on English language education policy of Bangladesh. I told them I am particularly interested to know about the use of English and its importance in our education system. I also showed them my interview questionnaire. I sometimes gave my interview questionnaire to the interviewees prior to my interview, as some of them were busy and did not have time to answer my questions.

All the collected data were recorded. The recorded versions were transcribed and the data were reduced to format for coding. In the following paragraphs I will

deal with the results of my interviews. I will look at the debate on language policy with specific reference to the place of Bengali and English.

Is English Threatening Bengali?

The constitution of Bangladesh states Bengali is a national language of Bangladesh (Bangladesh constitution, 1979) and Government declared English as a second rather than a foreign language (Zaman, 2004). My second question asked to the interviewees was whether English threatens Bengali (Here by threatening I mean the problem of survival of Bengali language). In this section I will discuss interviewees' views of the position of Bengali in Bangladesh.

All thirteen interviewees agree that English is not threatening Bengali. They believe that Bengali is a well-established language and there is no concern about its survival. Bengali is given importance in the constitution and it is used in the parliament. Bengali has a high priority almost everywhere in Bangladesh. There is no competitor of Bengali language. It is the official language, it is used extensively everywhere and in every sphere of life. English is a required language for internationalism and job opportunity, but it can never take the place of Bengali. In this view, there is no conflict between Bengali and English. These two languages are not competitors but instead complement each other.

One of the interviewees mentioned that English does not threaten Bengali but Bengali threatens many other minority languages, such as Marma. Minority speakers need to learn Bengali to live in Bangladesh and Bengali is accessed by almost all people of Bangladesh. Bengali has a long tradition, literature, culture and history

In this section I discussed policy planners' views regarding the Bengali language and its survival. All the interviewees think that English does not threaten Bengali at all. Bengali has its enriched literature and culture. There is no question

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regarding the survival of Bengali. But Bengali threatens many minority languages in Bangladesh.

English Medium Instruction

One of the policy planners favored more emphasis of English language in education and language policy, due to the relation between English and economic development. According to him, Bengali is a national language of Bangladesh, used widely in Bangladesh, but for international exchange and diplomatic reasons knowledge of English is necessary. He mentioned that language policy of Bangladesh emphasizes Bengali but in reality knowledge of English is necessary everywhere. Thus there is a gap between the language policy and reality.

He recommended that a healthy language policy should give more emphasis to English. English education needs to be more accessible and more useful for all, both in remote areas as well as in urban areas, though it would not be an easy task to do.

Bengali Medium Instruction

Eight among the thirteen interviewees favored Bengali as a medium of instruction in all streams. They preferred to introduce English as a subject to study not in the primary level but in the secondary level. One of them said,

Actually we do not have any proper language policy in that sense. I do not know about English whether it is a foreign language or second language. How English will be taught and what kind of methodology will be followed is not known. But I personally think that English should be taught from grade six. If students learn English from grade six up to grade twelve, I think that is enough for a student to study at the higher studies. As you know the medium of instruction in the higher education is English.

Eight of the interviewees recommended that English should be introduced in

the secondary level but not in the primary level while four of the policy planners recommended English should introduced from primary level. One of the policy planners had no opinion regarding this. According to these eight policy planners, Bengali teaching is not adequate and needs to be improved. Many Bengali teachers do not know standard Bengali. They use regional Bengali in the class. They also do not know how to teach Bengali. Therefore, government should work to improve the textbooks in Bengali and Bengali teaching.

The interviewees favor implementation of English-medium instruction from the secondary level because of the availability of the textbooks. Most of the textbooks in the higher education are in English. So, at present knowledge of English is necessary. Government should take major effort to translate books into Bengali or to produce original books in Bengali. Although the Bangla Academy has done a lot in this regard, many major attempts need to be taken. Supporters of this approach argue that mother-tongue education is the most effective education for all levels of the educational system.

Bilingual Education

Three among the thirteen interviewees mention that English should be introduced from first grade of the school. They argue that English is necessary for globalization so we cannot implement only Bengali as a medium of instruction. They favor a bilingual-education system from the first grade. They recommend that the process of English teaching needs to be reformed. Bangladesh needs to implement communicative methods rather than grammar translation methods for English teaching. All streams of education should follow the same methods.

In this section I discussed the views of the policy planners on medium of instruction policy. There are disagreements regarding this issue. Eight of the policy planners prefer mother-tongue medium of instruction with the implementation of English from the secondary school, three of the policy planners prefer a bilingual

education system with the implementation of English from the first grade of school and one of the interviewees argued English should be given more emphasis in the language policy. Although there are disagreements among the policy planners, all of them support English education from the first grade or from the secondary level.

Benefits of English Language

Bangladesh faces some of the most difficult problems in educational systems in the world. 38% of the population is illiterate. Although the constitution of Bangladesh declares that education should be free and compulsory for all children, in reality many people know the alphabet but cannot read books (Hossain & Tollefson, 2006) and 42.7 percent people live below the poverty line (Ahmed, 2002). Within this social context, English remains a language of education and employment, but English is accessible to a very few people in Bangladesh, especially in rural areas (Hossain & Tollefson, 2006). My fourth question to the interviewees was: Can English be a language that will be helpful for all? In this section I will discuss policy planner's views regarding the benefits of English education in Bangladesh.

There are disagreements among the policy planners over this issue. Eight of the policy planners mentioned that English can be a language that would be helpful for all. Supporters of this view believe that one can survive in Bangladesh without the knowledge of English, but for a better life, knowledge of English is necessary. According to them, English is necessary for getting jobs in multinational companies, for getting jobs abroad, for social and economic reasons, for globalization and also for higher education in Bangladesh. They also argue that Bangladesh needs a model for English language teaching which would be appropriate for this country. If the present education system changes, English can be a language that would be helpful for all.

Three among the thirteen policy planners believes that English could be a helpful language for a certain number of people, but not for everyone. English has little value for people like fishermen or peasants who rarely leave their villages. Bilingualism is a burden for them. Supporters of this approach believed that English can be helpful for some, especially those who go for higher education. But in Bangladesh very few people go for higher education. English is not necessary or helpful for all.

In this section I focused on the policy planner's views regarding the benefits of English. There are disagreements among the policy planners regarding the necessity of English. Some of them mentioned that knowledge of English is necessary for all and others mentioned that knowledge of English would be helpful only for some.

Goal of Bengali Medium Education

In Bangladesh, the formal education system consists of three types of school which are distinguished by the medium of instruction and also by the role of religion. Most rural public schools and many urban schools are Bengali-medium schools (Hossain & Tollefson, 2006). My fifth question was: What is the goal of Bengali-medium education? There are no disagreements among the policy makers over this issue. All of them agree that the goal of Bengali-medium education is to educate young people to become educated citizens of the country. One of them stated,

"The aim of Bengali medium education is to truly educate an individual. This is likely to be achieved by providing appropriate knowledge and moral values. These moral values are consistent with the spirit of Bengali nationalism and cultures. Bengali medium education would ultimately help one to grow upholding these cultural traditions and values."

Another clear goal of Bengali medium education is to develop the Bengali language itself. The history of the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation is clearly connected with the language movement. One of the functions of the Bengali medium education is to reemphasize Bengali in all spheres of national life.

Goal of English Medium Education

Beside the Bengali-medium schools, there are also many English-medium schools in Bangladesh, where the medium of instruction is English. Less than 10% of all students at the primary level attend English-medium schools (Hossain & Tollefson, 2006). My sixth question was: What is the goal of English medium schools in Bangladesh? There are disagreements over this issue. Four among the eight policy planners mentioned that the goal of Bengali and English medium education is the same: to educate the young generation, with necessary skills. The only difference is the medium of instruction. They mention that English-medium schools provide more advantage to the students than the Bengali-medium schools in terms of proficiency of English language. Some parents prefer to send their children to English medium schools, as English can give the opportunity for contact with the outer world. One of the policy planners had no opinion.

Seven of the thirteen policy planners mention that the effect of the English medium education is to create a privileged class in the society. Elite people send their children to the English medium schools for economic and socio-cultural reasons. Elite people believe that English is a prestigious language in the society, a language of international trade and commerce, the language of administration in the country. English education helps their children get good jobs abroad, attend higher education abroad, and emigrate abroad. English education makes children much more mobile in the job market. English medium schools prepare their students to

pass O level and A level examinations, to facilitate the students' entry into the universities of the UK or the US. In order to get all these benefits, elite people send their children to the English medium schools. According to interviewees with this perspective, such parents are little concerned with promoting patriotism and love of Bengali culture. Students of the English medium schools represent the elite class of the society.

In this section I discussed policy planner's views regarding the goal of Bengali and English-medium education. There is not disagreement regarding the goal of Bengali-medium education. But there is a disagreement regarding the goal of English medium-education. Some believe that the goal of both media-of-instruction is the same, but others believe that English-medium education is creating a class division, which gives power and privilege to a few.

Bengali and Globalization

Bengali is the national language of Bangladesh and it has a long history. My seventh question was whether Bengali can cope with globalization. There are disagreements over this issue.

Eleven of the interviewees agree that Bengali cannot cope with globalization. They point out that Bengali is spoken mainly in Bangladesh and West Bengal. According to the interviewees in spite of having a long history, Bengali does not to meet the necessity of globalization. At present Bengali cannot be a global language.

One of the interviewees believes that Bengali can cope with globalization, given the fact that there are more than 250 million Bengali speakers in the world. Its speakers live in Bangladesh, India, the US, Britain, Japan, Italy and many other countries. Including Bangladesh, there are many Bengali television and radio channels in New York, Britain and India. He also mentions that the economy of Bangladesh is growing. One of the policy planners mentioned that Bangladesh is

predicted to be one of the top ten countries for investment in the world in the coming years. Bangladesh economy is based on garments and textiles, and is nicely placed on global scheme. Moreover, Bengali is an enriched language, with a long history and culture which its speakers would like to uphold even in the light of globalization. Theoretically Bengali can cope with globalization, though practically it is difficult.

In this section I discussed the policy planner's views regarding Bengali and globalization. Most of the interviewees believe that Bengali cannot be global language in spite of having a long history and enriched culture.

Rural and Urban Differences

My eighth question to the policy makers was whether there is any gap between the teaching process of rural and urban areas. All the policy planners agreed that there is a huge gap between the rural and urban schools. According to them, rural schools do not get proper attention. Teachers are not qualified enough to teach. The school atmosphere is also very different. Rural school do not have proper atmosphere to study. There is a difference in the communications and accommodation systems too. In the rural area, there is no access to English books, journals, internet and periodicals. Even English newspapers published in Dhaka do not reach the village. Socio-economic inequality, differences of standard of living and attitudes of life play major roles. The salary of the teachers also varied between rural and urban area. Overall improvement in the rural sector is necessary.

Quality of English Teaching

It is clear through my classroom observation that the quality of English teaching in the secondary level is unsatisfactory. One of the problems of teaching English is low percentage of teachers who have received teacher's training. The

difference between rural and urban schools is very severe. In some schools, it seems that English teaching means to read books in front of the students. Students respond to the teacher's questions with memorized answers. Even the teachers who have training cannot implement communicative techniques in the classroom because of large class sizes. My last question to the policy planners was about the quality of English teaching at the secondary schools.

All of the interviewees agree that there are many problems in the English teaching. According to them, curricula need to be modernized and updated, textbooks are unsatisfactory and teacher training is poor. Teaching methods and teaching aids have major problems. Teachers are very low paid in the rural area and they do not have high social status. Teachers follow traditional grammar translation method and students depend on rote learning. Teachers who are supposed to teach English in the rural areas know little English. Bangladesh also does not have a well defined syllabus. Bangladesh does not have an education policy which can prepare students for today's world.

In this paper I discussed the policy planner's views about the present educational system and language policy of Bangladesh. Findings of the policy planners' interviews reveal that all policy planners believe that English is needed in Bangladesh for modern technology, higher studies abroad, a wider range of job opportunities and economic development. Almost all of them believe that English is also not a threat to the national identity of Bangladeshi people. English is not a threat to the status of the Bengali language in Bangladesh. All of them believe that Bangladeshi people have an ideological and sentimental attachment to the Bengali language. The interviewees have positive attitudes towards the utility and the need for English. All the policy planners favor English education for pedagogical and economic reasons. But accessibility of this language is limited to a small number of

English as a Global Language in Post-Colonial South Asia: Perspective on Bangladesh people. There are inequalities in learning English among the rural and urban children. The quality of English teaching in Bangladesh is seriously questioned and teachers' training seems inadequate. Bangladesh are taking English as their medium of instruction in education not because this country has a huge contribution in the global economy but because English is necessary to survive in Bangladesh.

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